

**Thomas Jefferson to James Lewis, Jr., May 9, 1798,  
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Leicester Ford.**

**TO JAMES LEWIS, JUNIOR J. MSS.**

Philadelphia, May 9, 1798.

Dear Sir, —I am much obliged by your friendly letter of the 4th inst. As soon as I saw the first of mr. Martin's letters, I turned to the newspapers of the day, & found Logan's speech, as translated by a common Indian interpreter. The version I had used, had been made by Genl Gibson. Finding from mr. Martin's style, that his object was not merely truth, but to gratify party passions, I never read another of his letters. I determined to do my duty by searching into the truth, & publishing it to the world, whatever it should be. This I shall do at a proper season. I am much indebted to many persons, who, without any acquaintance with me, have voluntarily sent me information on the subject. Party passions are indeed high. Nobody has more reason to know it than myself. I receive daily bitter proofs of it from people who never saw me, nor know anything of me but through Porcupine & Fenno. At this moment all the passions are boiling over, and one who keeps himself cool and clear of the contagion, is so far below the point of ordinary conversation, that he finds himself insulated in every society. However, the fever will not last. War, land tax & stamp tax, are sedatives which must calm its ardor. They will bring on reflection, and that, with information, is all which our countrymen need, to bring themselves and their affairs to rights. They are essentially republican. They retain unadulterated the principles of '75, and those who are conscious of no change in themselves have nothing to fear in the long run. It is our duty still to endeavor to avoid war; but if it shall actually take place, no matter by

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whom brought on, we must defend ourselves. If our house be on fire, without inquiring whether it was fired from within or without, we must try to extinguish it. In that, I have no doubt, we shall act as one man. But if we can ward off actual war till the crisis of England is over, I shall hope we may escape it altogether.

I am, with much esteem, dear Sir, your most obedient humble servant.